



Public Benefits for Kinship Caregivers

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About Me

- With Southeastern Ohio Legal Services as an attorney since 1977
- Appalachian Children Victim's Assistance and Prevention Program
- Project Director of Violence Against Women Act grant and Victims of Crime Act grant
- Involved in numerous community organizations related to homelessness, domestic violence, and access to health care



Topics for Today

- Kinship Permanency Incentive Program
- Ohio Works First (OWF), Prevention, Retention & Contingency Program
- SNAP or food assistance & WIC
- Medicaid, Help Me Grow, other programs
- Child Care
- HEAP & Weatherization
- Housing Assistance
- Adoption Subsidies
- Coming soon-Kinship Navigator assistance



A dark blue, irregularly shaped graphic with a splatter effect, containing white text. The graphic is centered on a white background and has a rough, hand-painted appearance with some lighter blue and white splatters around its edges.

Have any of you had
experience applying
for benefits?

There are a wide variety of public benefit programs



- Each of the public benefit programs have their own income and eligibility criteria
- Department of Job and Family Services may require a different application for each one;
- You will need verifications such as proof of relationship to child, income, identity of each member of the household and sometimes household expenses;
- Legal Services helps people when their applications for assistance are delayed or denied and can also represent individuals in administrative hearings to appeal delays, terminations and denials

Kinship Permanency Incentive Program to support children in the homes of family or friends


- These payments are time-limited incentive payments to defray costs of placement and can continue at six-month intervals.
- Maximum incentive amount may not exceed eight payments and no longer than 48 consecutive months
- You must have been awarded legal custody or guardianship on or after July 1, 2005
- The Children Services agency has conducted a home assessment and approved the child's placement
- The gross income of the family cannot exceed 300% of the federal poverty line



Ohio Works First (OWF)

- You may be eligible for a child-only assistance group and your income is not considered.
- You must be related by blood or marriage or be a legal guardian or custodian of the minor children.
- The payment is lower because the other household members are not a part of the assistance.
- The other household members are not required to work and there is no time limit for receipt of benefits.
- You will be required to cooperate with child support requirements although there are a few exceptions.
- As of January 2020, the payment standard for one child in a child-only group is \$302, for two children it is \$412.
- You may also apply to be included in the assistance group but the agency will look at your resources and you may be required to work and be subject to a time limit.
- CAVEAT – if the natural parent also resides in the household, the natural parent is required to apply and receive the benefit even if the grandparent or aunt or relative is the one with custody.





Food Assistance and
other Income related
programs

Applying for Food Assistance

- Unlike OWF (Ohio Works First), food assistance (food stamps) does not have a child-only case and JFS must consider the entire household gross income to determine eligibility if everyone prepares meals and eats together.
- You will be required to show proof of housing expenses such as rent receipt, mortgage payments, proof of income, bank statements, child care expenses and proof of any benefits you receive.
- If you are eligible, the benefits will be approved and placed on a plastic debit card that you can use for food items.
- Food assistance cannot be used to buy non-food items such as soap, diapers, alcohol or tobacco.



OTHER SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- Prevention, Retention & Contingency Program - financial assistance to help low-income families find and maintain employment and can also be used for clothing, shelter assistance and transportation.
- Child Care – DJFS offers financial assistance to eligible guardians to pay for child care while they engage in work or approved school or training activities. It is an income-based program.
- Adoption assistance and Post-Adoption special services subsidy – available to facilitate the timely placement of children with special needs or circumstances that make it difficult to place them and to pay for treatment. This is administered by the local children services agency.
- Child Support – If the parents of the children are ordered to pay child support and you do not receive OWF, the child support will be made payable to you if you have the children living in your home full-time. The local child support enforcement agency will provide services to obtain and maintain child support at no cost to you.
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Home Weatherization and other Housing Assistance– HEAP and Weatherization are energy assistance programs for low-income families and you should contact your local community action organization. You may also be eligible for federally subsidized housing – you should check with your local housing authority for more information.



Help with Medical Expenses

Healthy Start and Healthy Families Medicaid

- Healthy Start and Healthy Families Medicaid programs offer free and low-cost comprehensive healthcare coverage to families, children (up to age 19) and pregnant women with limited income.
- If you are receiving OWF through a child-only grant, the children in your care are automatically eligible and no other application needs to be made.
- You may also be eligible as a family and you can apply for coverage.
- If you are eligible, your household (or the child if a child-only case) will issued a health card with a number that must be presented each time you receive services or fill a prescription.



WHAT IF MEDICAID REFUSES TO COVER A SERVICE

- The Medicaid program utilizes managed care companies to review services to determine that all services that are paid for by Medicaid are appropriate.
- Your doctor may have prescribed a particular medication or therapy or proposed a surgery that Medicaid refuses to cover.
- Your child may be receiving home health services or other types of therapy that the managed care company later determines is no longer needed or should be reduced.
- There are ways to appeal those denials, reductions or terminations. All actions are required to be given in writing and there are appellate rights and information on each of those notices.
- This is also the kind of case that Legal Services may be someone to contact for assistance in pursuing those appeals.

Other Programs

- Women, Infants and Children Program – a supplemental feeding program with health care referrals and nutrition programming for infants and children up to age 5 – often operated by your local community action organization.
- Help Me Grow – a parental support program providing parenting education, home visiting, early intervention and connection to resources for families with young children under the age of 3 – there is a Help Me Grow program in every county in Ohio
- Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps and the Sickle Cell Service Program are both operated by the Ohio Department of Health

COMING
SOON!

- The State of Ohio is in the process of establishing a Kinship Navigator Program that will be available to kinship providers throughout the state. Unlike some of the other programs, it will be available to all types of kinship providers – legally established as well as informal arrangements. Funds will be made available for a wide range of needs and not subject to a narrow list. The details have not been released yet but should be coming soon.

Where Can I Get Help?

Southeastern Ohio Services serves 30 counties throughout Southeastern Ohio.

However, every other county in Ohio is also served by a legal services program. If you are having problems accessing any of the programs listed in today's discussion or last week, you should seek out the legal services organization closest to you.

Ohio Legal Help is a website designed to also provide you with additional information and, if needed, referral to the legal services closest to you – ohiolegalhelp.org

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Questions?


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