



Your rights dealing with DSHS

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- ❖ Read this only if you live in Washington State.
 - ❖ You can find all the fact sheets we link to here at [WashingtonLawHelp.org](https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org).
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Should I read this?

Yes, you should read this if you think you qualify for public assistance for families and individuals with low incomes. We discuss briefly here what assistance you can get from DSHS, and what your basic rights are regarding public assistance.

The [Washington Department of Social and Health Services](https://www.dshs.wa.gov) (DSHS) is a state government agency that provides many types of services and benefits to people who live in Washington State who need support to be safe and healthy. Visit [dshs.wa.gov](https://www.dshs.wa.gov) to learn more.

What can I apply for at DSHS?

You can apply for many services at DSHS, including:

- Food stamps.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Read [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\): The Basics](#) to learn more.
- Emergency financial help for families. Read [Additional Requirements \(AR\): Emergency Cash Help, Diversion Cash Assistance \(DCA\): Emergency Cash Help, or Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program \(CEAP\): Extra Money for Needy Families](#) to learn more.
- Childcare.
- Help getting child support. Read [How Can I Collect Child Support?](#) to learn more.
- Cash help for Aged, Blind and Disabled persons (ABD). Read [Help for People Unable to Work: ABD and HEN](#) to learn more.
- In-home care, personal care, nursing home, and other long-term care services.

- Treatment for addiction.
- Mental health services.
- Services for foster parents.

This is not a complete list. Visit Washington Connection at bit.ly/3J4GH3C to learn about other benefits and services you can apply for and apply for benefits online.

What are my rights when dealing with DSHS?

- DSHS must let you apply to get benefits or services.
- DSHS must give you a written decision on your application.
- DSHS must let you see and get copies of anything in your DSHS file as soon as possible.
- You have the right to talk to any DSHS employee's supervisor.
- DSHS must grant your timely request for a hearing if you want to fight DSHS' decision to turn down (deny), lower, or stop (terminate) benefits. Read [Representing Yourself at an Administrative Hearing](#) to learn more.
- DSHS may keep giving you benefits until the hearing, if you ask for the hearing within ten days of the notice.
- DSHS may not retaliate against you for using your rights.

I do not speak English. How do I get an interpreter or language support?

- DSHS must give you an interpreter at no expense to you.
- DSHS must give you notices and letters in your own language if you do not speak English or you have limited ability to speak English.
- DSHS must give you an interpreter as soon as possible to help you in interviews, filling out forms in English, and answering DSHS' letters.

Read [Interpreters for People with Limited English Proficiency](#) to learn more.

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- ❖ If you think DSHS is treating you unfairly due to your race or ethnicity, you can file a complaint. You can fill out the form at bit.ly/3yXpaqR and follow its instructions. Or you can call the state Human Rights Commission at 1-800-233-3247.
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How do I get help filling out forms or understanding what DSHS wants me to do to get benefits?

Tell your DSHS worker that you need help. You can get special help called **Necessary Supplemental Accommodations (NSA)** in getting and keeping benefits if you have a health problem, or for other reasons like a hard time reading or communicating. Read [DSHS Help for People with Disabilities: Necessary Supplemental Accommodations](#) to learn more.

Get Legal Help

- **Apply online** with [CLEAR*Online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online) - nwjustice.org/apply-online
- **Facing a legal issue in King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call 2-1-1 (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- **Facing a legal issue outside of King County** (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)? Call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am - 12:15 pm or apply online at nwjustice.org/apply-online.
- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387.
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819.
- **Seniors (age 60 and over)** with a legal issue outside of King County can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111.

Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers can call any of these numbers using the relay service of your choice.

Interpreters provided.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

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