

# Help with Medical Bills for Immigrants without Legal Immigration Status

- 
- ❖ Read this only if you live in the state of Washington.
  - ❖ You can find all the fact sheets we link to here at [WashingtonLawHelp.org](http://WashingtonLawHelp.org).
- 

## I do not have immigration status. Can I get any help with my medical bills?

**Maybe.** In the state of Washington, some programs are open to all immigrants with low incomes who meet other program requirements. **Your immigration status does not matter for these programs:**

- Medical coverage for children under 19
- Medical coverage for pregnant women
- Emergency Medicaid for treatment of emergency medical conditions in a hospital
- Treatment for cancer, benign life-threatening tumors, or dialysis

If you have turned in your immigration application, but have not yet gotten immigration status, you may be able to get other benefits. Read [Washington Public Assistance for Lawfully Present Non-Citizens](#).

## Am I eligible to get coverage under the pregnant women and children's health programs?

Maybe. All low-income children under age 19 and pregnant women with low incomes can get this help in the state of Washington **if** you meet other program requirements. Your immigration status does not matter.

If you apply for medical benefits for your child, the Health Care Authority (HCA) or Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will ask for proof of your child's immigration status. This is only to figure out if your child should get coverage

through state or federal funding. Read [Apple Health for Kids Program: How to Respond to DSHS Notices about Immigration and Citizenship Documents](#).

## **I am eligible to get coverage under the pregnant women and children's health programs. Do I have to pay for it?**

It depends.

**Medical assistance for children is free** for families with incomes below 215% of the Federal Poverty Level (about \$56,330 for a family of four in 2020).

**Families with incomes between 215% and 317%** of the Federal Poverty Level must pay a premium.

## **What does Emergency Medicaid cover?**

It covers treatment of certain emergency medical conditions **in a hospital**. It does **not** cover services:

- In a clinic
- After the hospital discharges you
- Unrelated to your emergency you get at the same time as the emergency treatment

You can have coverage under the Emergency Medicaid program for up to 3 months before you apply for coverage. This means you can apply after getting the emergency treatment. You should do so as soon as you can anyway. While you are at the hospital, ask hospital staff for help applying.

## **I get medical assistance. Will this stop me from getting legal immigration status?**

**NO.** Medical assistance is **not** considered in the public charge test that affects some people when they apply for their Green Card. You and your family members can use all forms of medical assistance without fear. This includes Washington Apple Health, Qualified Health Plans, and Charity Care. To learn more, read [Public Charge: What You Need to Know](#).

## **I am not eligible to get any medical assistance. Can I get any other help with medical bills?**

- If you get treatment in a hospital (not a clinic) and have a low income, the hospital may have to lower your bill. Read [“Charity Care:” Medical Coverage for Hospital Based Medical Services.](#)
- You can get treatment for a low or reduced fee from a community health clinic.
- You can buy private health insurance. You cannot buy it on the health benefits exchange (“Healthplanfinder”). You cannot get federal subsidies or tax credits to help pay for it.

## **Some of my family are lawfully present immigrants. Can they get medical coverage even if I cannot?**

**Yes.** You can still apply to get coverage for your eligible family members. **Example:** Many parents who are not eligible to get most medical assistance can still get assistance for their lawfully present or U.S. citizen children.

## **I believe I am eligible to get medical assistance. My application was turned down (denied).**

You should:

- Ask for a hearing
- Contact a legal services lawyer for advice. (See contact information below.)
- Read [Representing Yourself at an Administrative Hearing.](#)

## Get Legal Help

- Outside of King County, 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](http://nwjustice.org/apply-online)
- In King County, call 2-1-1 weekdays between 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- Seniors (age 60 and over) can also call CLEAR\*Sr at 1-888-387-7111 (statewide).
- You can also apply online with CLEAR\*Online: [nwjustice.org/get-legal-help](http://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help).

---

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

© 2021 Northwest Justice Project — 1-888-201-1014.

(Permission for copying and distribution granted to the Alliance for Equal Justice and to individuals for non-commercial purposes only.)