

Help for People Unable to Work: ABD and HEN

Should I read this?

Yes, if both these are true: you

- Have very low income and resources.
- Cannot work due to disability or incapacity.

These Washington state programs may be able to help:

- **ABD** - cash assistance for adults with disability similar to SSI disability standards. The condition has lasted at least twelve months OR you expect it to last that long (or to result in death).
- **HEN** - non-cash housing and “essential needs” help for adults unable to work due to incapacity for at least 90 days. If you are eligible for ABD, you are also eligible for a referral to the HEN program.

Do I get medical benefits with ABD and HEN?

No. Medical benefits no longer come with these. You apply for Medicaid separately. See, “Can I Apply for Medicaid now that HEN and ABD do not include Medicaid Automatically,” at the end.

Most low-income adults without disability or incapacity can get Medicaid now. You do not need to get ABD and HEN to get Medicaid.

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- ❖ **Exception:** Medicaid requires citizenship or specific kinds of immigration status. If you do not have that, but you qualify for ABD and a HEN referral, DSHS can approve you for a state-funded medical program, [Medical Care Services](#).
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What is ABD?

ABD (Aged Blind Disabled) gives cash benefits. In 2018, a single person can get up to \$197 a month.

Can I get ABD?

Maybe, if you have income and resources below the allowed levels **and** you are:

- 65 or older OR
- Blind OR
- Have a disabling physical or mental condition keeping you from working full-time for at least twelve months AND
- Your disability is not primarily due to alcohol or drug addiction

What is HEN?

HEN is **non-cash** help. It can

- Pay for housing costs.
- Give you other “essential needs” items.

(See “What Help Can I Get From HEN,” below.)

Am I eligible for the HEN referral program?

Yes, if either of these is true:

- You get ABD.
- You are “incapacitated” and cannot work for at least 90 days. Your income and resources are below the allowed levels.

Who else is not eligible for the HEN referral program?

You are not eligible for HEN if you already get or qualify for

- **PW** (Pregnant Women Assistance)
- **TANF (cash assistance for needy families)**
- **SSI** (federal disability assistance)

You are also ineligible for HEN if

- You suffer from substance abuse but are not in treatment.
- You are fleeing to avoid prosecution or punishment for a felony.

How do I apply for ABD or the HEN referral program?

You apply with DSHS. You can apply online through Washington Connection (www.washingtonconnection.org) or in person at your local DSHS office.

DSHS requires you to give recent medical evidence about your physical and/or mental health conditions. If you need help getting or

paying for medical records or exams, DSHS must help you.

If DSHS approves you for the “HEN referral” program, they refer you to apply for HEN assistance with a HEN provider in your community.

I live with my child. I do not get TANF. Can I qualify for ABD and/or HEN?

It depends.

- **You may qualify for ABD or HEN** if you cannot get TANF because of the 60-month time limit for TANF benefits.
- **You cannot get ABD or HEN** if you do not get TANF because you refuse to or do not meet a TANF rule, such as work requirements.

DSHS denied my application for ABD and/or the HEN referral program. What can I do?

You have 90 days from the date on the notice to appeal. If DSHS denies you both, you can appeal just the HEN referral program denial or both ABD and HEN.

DSHS approved me for the HEN referral program. What happens now?

It can be confusing. DSHS does *not* provide you HEN assistance. You need the DSHS “HEN referral” before you can apply for HEN assistance from a HEN provider in your community.

The local HEN provider decides what assistance to give you based on state

Department of Commerce guidelines.
Funding for HEN is limited.

How do I find a HEN provider?

DSHS should refer you to your local HEN provider. The HEN Provider directory is [online](#) at [HEN Provider Directory](#).

What help can I get from HEN?

Housing & Utilities assistance: The local HEN provider may pay rent and/or utility assistance directly to a landlord or utility company for you. In some counties, HEN will pay back rent, utility bills, and/or move-in deposits. HEN may pay other costs, such as application or screening fees, or storage costs.

Personal essential needs items: You might get

- Personal health and hygiene items (toothpaste, shampoo, toilet paper)
- Household cleaning supplies (laundry and dish soap)
- Bus passes, other transportation costs (limited)

❖ HEN does **not** give retailer gift cards, vouchers, or certificates to buy these things.

Can I get help with housing costs from HEN?

Yes, but only if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness. HEN may also give you free “essential needs.” (See above.)

When you apply for HEN assistance with your local HEN provider, you must have

proof you are homeless or at risk of homelessness. You might also have to prove other risk factors. The HEN provider will do an assessment of your risk.

❖ You do not need to be homeless to get HEN assistance.

I am staying with family or friends. How do I show risk of homelessness?

The friend/relative must fill out paperwork from HEN certifying

- They are currently requiring you to pay rent.
- They would evict you if you did not pay.

How much help for housing costs can I get from HEN?

It depends on where you live. The average is about \$300 a month. Amounts can be much smaller or higher. The HEN provider decides the amount after an assessment.

The agency does not give you the money. They directly pay your landlord, people you live with, and/or the utility company. HEN does not give housing vouchers like housing authorities do.

Where can I get more info about HEN?

Check these websites:

Department of Commerce:

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/consolidated-homeless-grant/>.

DSHS:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/housing-and-essential-needs>

Where do I apply for HEN assistance?

First DSHS must approve you and refer you to get HEN. After you get the DSHS HEN referral, you go to the HEN provider in your county to apply for HEN assistance.

The HEN provider denied me HEN benefits. Can I appeal?

Yes, but your rights are more limited than for help you get from DSHS. The agency where you apply for HEN has rules about when and why they can deny or end your assistance. These rules explain how to ask for a grievance and how that will go. Look for rules about:

- Termination of Participation and Grievance - when the agency ends your assistance
- Applicant Denial and Grievance - when the agency will not give you HEN assistance

Rules vary by county. **HEN is not an entitlement program.** The agency decides how much you get, and how long. If state funding for HEN runs out, there is no right to continuing benefits or assistance.

How long can I get HEN?

DSHS approves you for the HEN referral program for up to twelve months. You must renew your HEN eligibility with DSHS before your eligibility ends to keep getting HEN.

❖ You lose HEN if you get SSI.

HEN providers review your financial eligibility for the rent assistance every three months.

Some HEN providers keep paying for your housing for up to three months after you lose HEN referral. This depends on the HEN provider having other funding for the housing assistance. This is not available in all counties.

Communities can run out of their state HEN funds before the end of their contract periods. If this happens, they might stop or change their HEN programs. This can be temporary.

How do I apply for Medicaid now that HEN and ABD do not include Medicaid automatically?

- Apply online at: www.wahealthplanfinder.org
- Call 1-855-923-4633 (1-855-WAFINDER)
- Pick up a paper application at your local DSHS office

For more help, ask [Healthplanfinder](http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org) (the number or [website](#) above) or DSHS to help you find a free, trained In-Person Assister (“Navigator”) in your community.

You can find a Navigator service at the www.wahealthplanfinder.org website. Click on the “Customer Support” box on the top right corner of the page. Scroll down to click on the link for “Find a Navigator.”

There is more info about Medicaid programs at www.washingtonlawhelp.org. Select the folder for Health, and the section on the Affordable Care Act.

What if I need legal help?

- **Apply online with CLEAR*Online**
- <https://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help>
or

- **Call CLEAR at 1-888-201-1014**

CLEAR is Washington's toll-free, centralized intake, advice and referral service for low-income people seeking free legal assistance with civil legal problems.

- **Outside King County:** Call 1-888-201-1014, weekdays 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- **King County:** Call 211 for info and referral to an appropriate legal services provider, weekdays 8:00 am – 6:00 pm. You may also call (206) 461-3200, or toll-free 1-877-211-

WASH (9274). You can also get info on legal service providers in King County through 211's website, www.resourcehouse.com/win211/.

- **Persons 60 and Over:** Seniors age 60 or over may call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111, regardless of income. Assets limits may apply. Seniors in King County may call 2-1-1.

Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers can call CLEAR or 211 using the relay service of your choice.

CLEAR and 211 will conference in free interpreters when needed.

Free legal education publications, videos, and self-help packets covering many legal issues are available at www.washingtonlawhelp.org.

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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