

IMMIGRATION STATUS AND ELIGIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT HELP

Many non-U.S. citizens and undocumented immigrants ARE eligible for public assistance!

The relationship between immigration status and eligibility for government benefits (such as food stamps, medical coverage, and cash assistance) is complicated.

If you have or are applying for permission to legally live in the United States, eligibility depends on when you entered the U.S., how you entered, your specific immigration status and sometimes, which country you came from. If you have specific questions, call the **Public Benefits Hotline (1-800-520-5292)** or your local Legal Aid office. Go to www.oregonlawhelp.org for a directory of legal aid programs.

This flyer provides limited general information that applies to everyone, regardless of your immigration status. In order to apply for most government assistance, you will need to submit an application at your local Department of Human Services (DHS) office.

IF YOU ARE A MIGRANT OR SEASONAL FARMWORKER, YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPEDITED FOOD STAMPS:

You may have the right to expedited Food Stamps if you have little or no income when you apply. DHS must issue your Food Stamps benefits within seven days of your application. But, you must still be in the U.S. legally and

meet the other immigration status and other requirements for food stamps.

OAR 461-135-0575

Even if you are undocumented, you can get the following types of help IF . . .

1. YOUR CHILDREN WERE BORN IN THE UNITED STATES:

If your children were born in the U.S., they are citizens and can receive food stamps, Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and cash assistance (TANF), *even if you yourself are not eligible.*

2. YOU HAVE EMERGENCY MEDICAL NEEDS:

You may be eligible for emergency medical care and care during childbirth, even if you don't qualify for OHP because of your immigration status. The emergency medical program is called CAWEM.

OAR 461-135-1070

3. YOU ARE PREGNANT:

If you are pregnant but you don't meet the immigration status requirements for OHP, you can still get full medical coverage (as opposed to the more limited coverage through CAWEM) while you are pregnant if you live in Benton, Clackamas, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Multnomah, and on July 1, 2010, Lane counties.

Oregon Law Center

Public Benefits Hotline – 1-800-520-5292

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www.oregonlawhelp.org

4. YOU ARE A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

If you are a victim of domestic violence and you have children or you are pregnant, you may be eligible for emergency cash assistance from DHS to help you get into a safe living situation. This program is called Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS).

You can also get cash assistance (TANF) on a temporary basis if you are experiencing or are at risk of domestic violence. You can get these benefits even if you are undocumented.

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5. YOU ARE WORKING and NEED CHILDCARE:

If you are working and need help paying for childcare, you may be able to get childcare benefits from DHS even if you are not a citizen and even if you are undocumented.

You do not have to tell DHS your immigration status

If you are undocumented, you may simply tell DHS that you are interested in applying for benefits where eligibility does not depend on immigration status. Even though we have not heard of DHS staff reporting anyone's immigration status (and to do so would violate their rules on client confidentiality), it's best not to disclose that you do not have documentation.

Finally, you have the right to information and materials in the language you speak and understand.

Regardless of your immigration status, you have the right to written materials in the language you speak and understand. You also have the right to work with a case worker who speaks your language or to have an interpreter provided by DHS.

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For further information, call the **Public Benefits Hotline (1-800-520-5292)** or your local Legal Aid office. Go to www.oregonlawhelp.org for a directory of legal aid programs.

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