

Safety Net Supports During the COVID-19 Emergency

Free legal information from Legal Aid Services of Oregon & Oregon Law Center (updated 3-22-20)

Food resources

School lunches

If your child was receiving free breakfast/lunch at school, you can still access those meals. **There are no immigration status requirements to get free school meals.** [Click here](#) for locations where you can pick up pre-packaged school meals for all school aged children.

Free Food Banks/ Food Pantries

Find a site where you can get free food boxes near you at <https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/find-help/find-food/> or call 211. **There are no immigration status requirements for the food bank or food pantries.**

Meals on Wheels

Seniors age 60 or older who are at risk of malnutrition in Multnomah and Washington counties can sign up for free meals delivered to their home. Call 503-736-6325, or go to <https://www.mowp.org/what-we-do/meals-on-wheels/> to sign up. **There are no immigration status requirements for Meals on Wheels, so any senior can qualify.**

SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)

You may qualify for SNAP benefits (cash on an EBT card that can be used to purchase food). Eligibility is based on your household size and income.

- **Applying for benefits.** You can call or email a DHS office to access an application, get help applying, or report income changes. You can also apply online at <https://apps.state.or.us/onlineApplication/>. Find your local DHS office here <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/self-sufficiency.aspx>.
- **Using SNAP benefits.** You may be able to use your EBT card to order food online through Amazon and Walmart for home delivery (with delivery fees not covered by SNAP).
- **Immigration status.** Some immigration status requirements apply to SNAP, but households with

even one eligible member (for example a child) can qualify.

- **Extended eligibility during COVID-19.** Some people with no children in their household may have lost their SNAP benefits in the last two years because of “time limits.” Those time limits don't apply during this emergency, so you can re-apply for SNAP even if you were previously cut off from SNAP for time limits. Contact your local DHS Office or apply online (see above).

Women Infants and Children (WIC) Food benefits

WIC benefits are available for low income pregnant women, women who have recently given birth, women who are breastfeeding, and children under 5. **There are no immigration status requirements for WIC.** Find a WIC site here: <https://www.oregon.gov/OHA/PH/HEALTHYPEOPLEFAMILIES/WIC/Pages/countyinfo.aspx>, or call 211.

Cash Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

If you have children in your household and your income is very low, you may qualify for TANF (temporary assistance to needy families) monthly cash benefits. Some immigration status requirements apply to SNAP, but households with even one eligible member can qualify.

Applying for benefits. Contact your local Oregon Self Sufficiency office, <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/Self-Sufficiency.aspx> or download an application at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ASSISTANCE/CASH/Pages/Apply-TANF.aspx>.

Unemployment Insurance and Employment Support Benefits

See our Employment Support Q&A for more information.

Health Care Resources

Oregon Health Plan (OHP)

You may qualify for free health coverage under the Oregon Health Plan. Eligibility is based on household size and income. Information on signing up for OHP is provided below.

Immigration status and OHP. Some immigration status requirements apply to OHP coverage. However, immigration status is not considered for children (under 19) and individuals who are pregnant. Additionally, non-eligible immigrants may be eligible for Emergency Medicaid (CAWEM) coverage (see below).

CAWEM (Emergency Medicaid)

CAWEM is a form of emergency coverage for individuals who would be otherwise be eligible for OHP, except for their immigration status. **CAWEM covers immigrants dealing with emergency healthcare issues.** Remember, children and pregnant adults don't need immigration status to qualify for OHP programs. CAWEM emergency Medicaid covers most emergency conditions. Information on applying is provided below.

COVID-19 testing and CAWEM. CAWEM emergency Medicaid covers COVID-19 testing at the Emergency room and COVID-19 treatment. You can sign up for CAWEM the same ways as signing up for OHP below.

Applying for OHP or CAWEM coverage

The best way to find out if you qualify for health benefits is to apply. If you don't qualify for OHP, you will be offered other options for health care, including CAWEM, Cover All Kids, and Pregnancy CAWEM. You can apply in three different ways.

1. **Best option: get help from a trained community partner.** Community partners across the state can help you apply (for free). Find your local community partner at <https://healthcare.oregon.gov/Pages/find-help.aspx>. Put in your zip code, check the box that says “community partner”, and select the language you speak.
2. **Call the OHP customer service line** at 1-800-699-9075 to apply over the phone, or to have them send you a paper application to fill out; or
3. **Apply online** <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/OHP/Pages/Apply.aspx>. Free or reduced-cost healthcare for uninsured individuals

People without health insurance

People without health insurance—including those with no insurance because they can't afford private insurance and don't have the immigration status to qualify for OHP—can get free or reduced price healthcare at county public health clinics and federally qualified health clinics.

To find the closest clinic of this kind, go to <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/HEALTHCAREPROVIDERSFACILITIES/HEALTHCAREHEALTHCAREREGULATIONQUALITYIMPROVEMENT/Documents/FQHCList.pdf> or call 211.

Remember that in a medical emergency, even uninsured individuals can get emergency care at an emergency room near them.

Questions or Problems with Public Benefits? Call the Oregon Law Center / Legal Aid Services of Oregon Public Benefits Telephone Hotline at 1-800-520-5292

“Public Charge” issues

Many immigrants are not subject to the Public Charge test at all. Also, many safety net benefits are not covered by the Public Charge test. To find out if you even need to worry about public charge based on your immigration status, review the Public Charge Fact Sheet here: <https://sharesystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/he2520.pdf>. This fact sheet is available in other language at: <https://oregonimmigrationresource.org/resources/?tab=public-charge>. Here are a few key points to remember:

- US citizens and LPRs who don't leave the US for more than 180 days will not face the Public Charge test at all.
- Public benefits received by an immigrant's eligible family members/children don't count against the immigrant in his/her public charge test.
- The federal Immigration Agency (USCIS) issued a statement clearly stating that they will not consider testing, treatment, or preventive care (if it becomes available) related to COVID-19 as part of the Public Charge test. You can read the full statement here: <https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>.