

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 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, SNAP (formerly food stamps), medical coverage, and cash assistance) is complicated.

If you have specific questions, call the Public Benefits Hotline (**1-800-520-5292**) or your local Legal Aid office. Go to <https://oregonlawhelp.org/find-legal-help> for a directory of legal aid programs.

These benefits are available to everyone who is low income, including those with no immigration status (immigrants who are undocumented):

Food

- ❖ **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have children under 5 you can get help buying some essential food items.
- ❖ **School Meals/Summer Meals:** Children in school may be eligible for free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches in school, and all children up to age 18 for [free meals in summer](#). Apply online for school meals at <https://www.ode.state.or.us/apps/frlapp> and find a summer food location at <https://oregonhunger.org/summer-food/>
 - **COVID Update:** School districts are offering grab-and-go or delivery meals for all children age 1-18 during the COVID emergency. Go to <https://oregonhunger.org/covid-19> to find a [list of sites by school district](#).
- ❖ **Food Banks:** Find a site where you can get free food boxes near you at <https://www.oregonfoodbank.org/find-help/find-food/> or call 211
- ❖ **Meals on Wheels:** If you are age 60 or older and at risk of malnutrition you may be eligible for free meals delivered to your home. Call 503-736-6325, or go to <https://www.mowp.org/what-we-do/meals-on-wheels/> for more information.

Medical

- ❖ **Emergency Medicaid (CAWEM):** You may be eligible for insurance to cover emergency medical care even if you don't qualify for the Oregon Health Plan because of your immigration status. **(COVID-19 testing at the Emergency room and treatment for COVID-19, including hospitalization, is covered by CAWEM).**
- ❖ **Pregnancy Coverage (CAWEM +):** If you are pregnant but you don't meet the immigration status requirements for the Oregon Health Plan, you may still get full medical coverage (as opposed to the more limited coverage through CAWEM) while you are pregnant and for at least 60 days after you give birth. **(COVID-19 testing and treatment is covered by CAWEM Plus).**

- ❖ **Cover All Kids:** If you (or your children) are under age 19 and don't meet the immigration status requirements for the Oregon Health Plan, you may get full coverage (including COVID-19 testing and treatment) from OHP through Cover All Kids.
- ❖ **Charity Care:** If you get medical care at a nonprofit hospital or affiliated clinic, the hospital may be required to offer free care.
- ❖ **Oregon Prescription Drug Program (OPDP or Oregon Rx):** If you are uninsured or underinsured the prescription drug program can help you pay for some medications.

Cash Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence

- ❖ **Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS):** 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 be safe from further violence.

These benefits are available if you have a qualifying immigration status (see below for the details), or if you don't have a qualifying immigration status but one of your children or dependents does (like a US citizen child living with you):

Food

- ❖ **SNAP (Food stamps):** Based on your household size and income, you can receive money on an EBT card that can be used to purchase food. Someone in the household must be a US Citizen, or a Qualified Immigrant. <https://apps.state.or.us/onlineApplication/>

Medical

- ❖ **Oregon Health Plan (OHP or Medicaid):** You may qualify for free health insurance coverage under the Oregon Health Plan if you are a US Citizen or a Qualified Immigrant. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/OHP/Pages/Apply.aspx>
- ❖ **Health Insurance Subsidies (ACA):** If you are buying a health insurance plan through the state Marketplace, you may qualify for a subsidy to help pay your insurance premium. You must be a US Citizen or Qualified Immigrant. <https://healthcare.oregon.gov/marketplace/Pages/index.aspx>
- ❖ **Compact of Free Association (COFA) Premium Assistance Program:** If you are a citizen of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia or Palau you may be eligible for free health insurance. Go to <https://healthcare.oregon.gov/marketplace/cofa/Pages/index.aspx> or call 1-855-268-3767 for more information.

Cash Assistance

- ❖ **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** If you have children in your household and your income is very low, you may qualify for monthly cash benefits. You must have at least one child who is a US Citizen or a Qualified Immigrant. <https://apps.state.or.us/onlineApplication/>
- ❖ **Unemployment:** If you have valid work authorization, but you lost your job you may qualify for unemployment benefits to help pay part of your income while you look for work. . For more information or to file for benefits:
<https://www.oregon.gov/employ/unemployment/pages/default.aspx>
 - **COVID Update: Unemployment benefits have been expanded to cover independent contractors, gig-workers, and those who can't work because of the public health emergency. You may also be eligible for increased payments and extended benefits. You must be legally authorized to work.**

Day care + Housing

- ❖ **Employment Related Day Care (ERDC):** If you are working and need help paying for childcare, you may be able to get childcare benefits from DHS. The child must be a US Citizen, a Qualified Immigrant. <https://apps.state.or.us/onlineApplication/>
- ❖ **Section 8 and Public Housing:** You may be eligible to receive subsidized housing based on your income. Someone in the household must be a US Citizen, a Qualified Immigrant.

The following people are “Qualified Immigrants” for public benefits:

- ✓ U.S. Citizens, no matter where you were born.
- ✓ Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card Holders) who have had their status for 5 years or more
- ✓ Refugees
- ✓ People granted Asylum
- ✓ People granted withholding of removal by an Immigration Judge
- ✓ VAWA Self-Petitioners
- ✓ Cuban or Haitian Entrants
- ✓ People granted parole for 1 year or more

Other statuses where people are often considered “Qualified Immigrants” and are eligible for benefits:

- ✓ T Visas
- ✓ Special Immigrant Translators (SIV)

What About Public Charge?

- ❖ Many immigrants are not subject to the Public Charge test at all.
 - ❖ U.S. Citizens are always exempt from the Public Charge rule.
 - ❖ Permanent Residents (Green Card Holders) who are not leaving the US will not face the Public Charge test at all.
 - ❖ Many humanitarian program recipients such as refugees, asylees, U-visa holders, T-visa holders, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status holders and VAWA Self-Petitioners are exempt from the Public Charge test.
- ❖ Most safety net benefits are not considered in the Public Charge test.
- ❖ Benefits received by an immigrant's eligible family members/children don't count against the immigrant in a Public Charge test.
- ❖ For more information about Public Charge, review the Public Charge Fact Sheet here: <https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/he2520.pdf>. This fact sheet is available in other languages at: <https://oregonimmigrationresource.org/resources/?tab=public-charge>.

Applying for Benefits

- ❖ You do not have to tell an agency your immigration status to apply for benefits that don't require any particular immigration status.
- ❖ You do not have to tell an agency your immigration status if you are not applying for yourself, but you are applying for benefits for your children.
- ❖ You have the right to an interpreter to help you apply for benefits (even if you are only applying for benefits for your children), and you have the right to written information and materials in the language you speak and understand.
- ❖ See "Safety Net Resources" <https://oregonlawhelp.org/issues/covid-19-resources/food-cash-assistance-health-care> for information on how to apply for benefits.

**FOR INFORMATION SPECIFIC
TO COVID-19 PLEASE GO TO
<https://oregonlawhelp.org/issues/covid-19-resources>**

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