



Government Benefits for Youth

Important!

NOTE: This is a complicated area of the law, it is important to talk with a lawyer about your special situation.

If you are **not** a permanent resident (have a green card) or a U.S. Citizen, do NOT apply for government benefits until you talk with a lawyer.

The exception is that you can apply for a state healthcare program called MinnesotaCare if you are undocumented and under 18. If you are undocumented and over 18 you are not eligible for MinnesotaCare. See our fact sheet [What is MinnesotaCare and Am I Eligible?](#)

I am under 18. Can I get help from government benefit programs?

If you are under 18 years-old, you may be able to get help from government benefit programs depending on your situation. Each program has income limits and asset limits. This means you can't make too much money, and you can't own too many things.

If you are living with your parent, legal custodian (by court order), or a family member and you have a child of your own

You may be able to get:

- A monthly cash benefit from MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program)
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – food stamps)
- MA (Medical Assistance)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children). You can also get WIC if you are pregnant.

Your parents' income and assets are counted for some of these programs.



If you are living with a person who is not your relative or legal custodian

You may be able to get:

- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – food stamps)
- MA (Medical Assistance)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children). You can also get WIC if you are pregnant.

You may be able to get these things whether you have a child or not. If the person you live with has a Delegation of Parental Authority (DOPA), but is not related to you, you can't get monthly cash from MFIP.

If you are living away from home and do not have a child

You may be able to get:

- A monthly cash benefit from the General Assistance (GA) program
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – food stamps)
- MA (Medical Assistance)

If you are a teen parent living away from home because of abuse

If you are living away from home because of physical or emotional abuse to you or your child by a parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian, you may be able to get:

- A monthly cash benefit from the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program- food stamps)
- MA (Medical Assistance)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)

If you are a teen parent and want to get MFIP benefits

You have to live with a natural or adoptive parent, legal guardian, other adult relative, or in an adult supervised living arrangement, unless:

- You don't know where your parents, legal guardian, or other adult relative are
- Your parent, legal guardian or other adult relative won't let you live with them
- You have lived away from your parents or legal guardian for at least 1 year before the birth of your child or you applied for MFIP, or
- An adult supportive living arrangement is not available for you and your child in the county you are living in

For other exceptions, contact the Youth Law Project through the MMLA intake line at (877) 696-6529. Or send us an email at youthlawproject@mylegalaid.org.

You may also be able to get subsidized day care to help pay your childcare costs.

If you or your child are disabled

You may be able to get disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. There are 2 disability programs:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Retirement, Survivor's, Disability Insurance (RSDI).



If you qualify for either of these programs you get a monthly cash benefit. You may also be able to get SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – food stamps) and MA (Medical Assistance).

If you get SSI and have a child, you can get a monthly cash benefit for your child from the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). If your child gets SSI, you can get a monthly cash benefit for you from MFIP.

If one of your parents is deceased

You may be able to get survivor's benefits from Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance Program (RSDI) from the Social Security Administration.

How do I get help from these programs?

You need to apply for the programs talked about in this fact sheet.

Apply to the Social Security Administration for SSI and RSDI. Call 1-800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call the toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778. Or you can apply online at www.ssa.gov.

Apply for all the others with your county department of economic assistance. Call your county information phone number or go online to www.dhs.state.mn.us. That is the Department of Human Services website. There is a list of county contact numbers on their website.



2-1-1 is a good resource to find help and information. Call 2-1-1 statewide, text your zip code to them at 898-211 for help in your area, or chat online at www.211unitedway.org.

See our fact sheet [MFIP for Parents Under Age 18](#) for more information on the MFIP Program.

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

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