Can I get a PCA from the Community First Supports and Services (CFSS) program

I heard the PCA program changed. How different is it?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) changed the program name from Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program to the Community First Supports and Services (CFSS) Program. CFSS has the same services as PCA but with more choice and more services. But many things stay the same, like:

- eligibility and review process
- covered services for activities of daily living (ADLs),
- instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) (including driving),
- health-related procedures and tasks,
- observation and redirection of behaviors
- your appeal rights

Your personal care assistant is still called your PCA.

What is the CFSS program?

The Community First Supports and Services (CFSS) Program is the new name for the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program. It provides services to you at home and in your community if you need help with basic day-to-day activities. These can be things like bathing, dressing, or transferring and moving about. A personal care assistant (PCA) is a person trained to help with basic daily routines.

A PCA may be able to help you if you have a physical, emotional, or mental disability or a chronic illness or injury. Having a PCA can help you stay independent in your own home instead of having to move someplace to be taken care of, like a nursing home.



Who can get personal care assistance services from a PCA?

If you have money you can pay for PCA services, help with chores, or other home care needs.

If you fall into certain financial or disability categories a state health care program might be able to pay for your PCA services. You may be able to connect to some of these services by calling the Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-2433 or Disability Hub MN at 1-866-333-2466.

How do I apply?

Contact your county social services office to find out how to set up an assessment. Tell them if you need an interpreter.

You can also get information and help from Minnesota Aging Pathways at 1-800-333-2433 or Disability Hub MN at 1-866-333-2466. Ask about PCA options available, agencies that offer PCA services and how to hire a PCA yourself.

If you are enrolled in a managed care health plan, like Health Partners, Medica, and others, contact them for help and instructions.

The Assessment

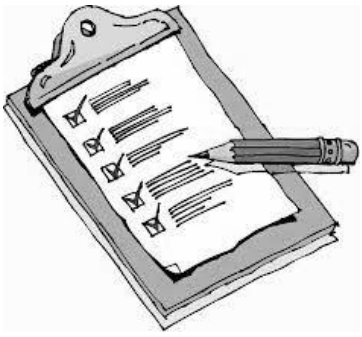
The assessment is done in your home. You get an assessment when you first ask for PCA help and then once a year after that. If your health condition changes a lot or your need for PCA help changes during the year, you can ask for an early assessment.

The assessment can take up to a few hours.

What kinds of things do they ask me about during the assessment?

They ask you questions to learn about:

- if you need a responsible party
- if you need help to do basic activities on an average day
- your medications
- your health
- your behavior



Tell the person doing the assessment what things you need help with every day or things you need help with every time you do them. Don't be shy. You should give them detailed information about the help you need to do basic activities. This can include hands-on help, help with remembering, and/or being supervised while you do something.



How do they decide if I can get a PCA?

The assessment helps the county decide **if** you can get help, and how much you can get. The decision depends mostly on if you need help with these daily activities:

- Getting dressed and undressed
- Clipping your nails, brushing your teeth and hair, and other grooming
- Bathing and showering
- Eating and feeding
- Transferring from where you are sitting or lying down to another place
- Walking and getting around
- Turning and moving your body and other positioning in place
- Using the toilet

Give Details About Everything

It's important to tell the person doing the assessment if you need help every time you do any of these activities. Or if there are times during the day that you can't do an activity because of your condition.

Give as much detail as you can about your health care needs or limitations. For example, you can get more PCA help if you have complex health issues like wound care or if you need special equipment to breathe. You might also get more PCA help because of certain kinds of behavior.

Make sure to explain any changes in your health since your last assessment and if you think it has affected your need for PCA services.

Good Communication is Really Important

You need to be understood to get a good assessment. Tell the person doing the assessment if you don't understand things or feel like they don't understand you.

If your interpreter is not doing a good job, tell the person doing the assessment.



After the Assessment

- You get a copy of your PCA Assessment and Service Plan within 10 days. Sometimes it's called a MN Choices Assessment.

- You also get a "notice" about the PCA decision. This "notice" is a letter that tells you if you are getting PCA help and how much. Sometimes it is called a "service agreement" or an "authorization" or "denial."

What if I don't agree with the assessment?

If you don't agree with the decision about your PCA services, you can appeal. The notice should have instructions on how to do this. In general, it is easier to win an appeal if your services are reduced from past years than if you are asking for more PCA hours than you used to have.

See our factsheet *CFSS/PCA Appeals*.

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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