



Status of Various Benefit Programs through the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services during COVID-19

County Assistance Offices: On March 16, the decision was made to continue to operate CAO, but close them to the public. This is necessary to ensure continuity of program operations so that the CAO may continue to process applications and maintain existing cases.

Medicaid: The CAO will continue to accept and process Medical Assistance applications. Individuals can indicate on the application if they have a health emergency, including COVID-19. The CAO will continue to prioritize Medical Assistance Applications where there is an immediate health concern. Self-attestations will be accepted.

SNAP: SNAP Certification periods will be extended at least through June 30, 2021 with increased benefits to continue for households with children who may be participating in virtual schooling due to the pandemic.

TANF: The CAO is encouraging employment and training providers to provide remote services where possible and, if not, exercise flexibility for participants. The CAO is also suspending face-to-face interviews and will not terminate or sanction recipients based on RESET requirements

LIHEAP: The season is scheduled to close April 9, 2021, but may be extended due to the pandemic. To apply visit www.compass.state.pa.us.

GENERAL ADVICE TO CLIENTS AT-RISK OF UTILITY SHUT OFF:

- (1) Call your utility, inform them you are a Protected Customer, and provide income information if required.
- (2) Apply for low-income assistance programs and hardship fund grants, even if you have not received a notice or letter from your utility.
- (3) Request a payment arrangement, but do not agree to a payment arrangement that you cannot afford or if there is a dispute as to the amount owed.
- (4) Pay what you can, when you can, because this establishes a good faith payment history, helping you to qualify for programs, grants, and future payment arrangements.
- (5) If you are a Protected Customer who is having issues proving you should be protected, file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission at least 24 hours before your scheduled shut-off.
- (6) Apply for LIHEAP now.

CHILD CARE OPERATIONS: The primary resource for individuals seeking certified child care in the Governor's Phased-In Approach to Reopen Business in Pennsylvania is www.findchildcare.pa.gov and should be used now that the Stay at Home Order is lifted. However, child care may not be available in every community, and if you are having difficulty finding child care, contact your ELRC at www.raiseyourstar.org. All open child care facilities must follow CDC guidelines for Child Care Programs that Remain Open.

ABAWD: Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents who were time limited off of the SNAP program can receive benefits for the duration of the current emergency by reapplying.

Office of Long-Term Living: Directed the Community HealthChoices managed care organizations (CHC-MCOs) to not reduce or terminate any personal assistance services or reassess long-term services and supports for at least the next three months back on March 17, 2020.

If you have questions, apply for services by calling 1-800-665-6957 or apply at nwls.org

