

State-Administered General Assistance (Cash Assistance)



Fact Sheet

What is State-Administered General Assistance?

State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA) is a cash assistance program operated by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The program typically serves adults who are either permanently or temporarily **unable to work** due to a documented medical condition and whose **income and assets are below program limits**.

Individuals who applied for and are waiting to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits from the Social Security Administration typically apply for SAGA while waiting for a decision. Those eligible for SAGA receive a small cash amount each month. Individuals cannot receive SAGA if they are eligible for any other state or federal cash assistance program.

What are the SAGA rules about being unable to work?

To qualify for SAGA benefits, individuals must be considered unable to work by meeting one of the following medical or non-medical unemployability criteria:

Medical Unemployability:

Provides medical documentation verifying inability to work for a short-term period of 2-6 months or a long-term period of 6 months or more. Long-term cases are referred to the Department's disability examiners for a review of unemployability. Short-term cases must have a recent connection to the labor market.

Non-medical Unemployability:

Individuals may also qualify for certain specific non-medical reasons which include: Over age 65, Over age 55 and no work history in the previous 5 years, Full-time high school student over age 18, Caring for an incapacitated spouse or child, Caring for a child under age 2, Approved for but pending the receipt of Social Security Benefits, VISTA Volunteer, Under age 16 and emancipated or legally married.

What are the income limits to be eligible for SAGA?

Gross income limit – For each person, the monthly gross income cannot be more than 300% of the maximum SSI benefit.

Applied income limit – There are also limits on the amount of “applied income” you may receive and still be eligible. Applied income is the amount of your total gross income minus certain exclusions and deductions. Your monthly applied income must be less than the maximum SAGA benefit available to you.

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What are the asset limits to be eligible for SAGA?

To receive SAGA cash assistance, a single person may not have more than \$500 in assets, and a married couple cannot exceed \$1000. Up to \$4,500 of a motor vehicle's value may be excluded as a counted asset. There is no asset test for individuals aged 18-21 who are unmarried, living with a family that still receives cash Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), and no longer receive TFA because of their age.

What else should I know?

A person may be required to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits before receiving SAGA cash assistance. Persons who are required to pursue SSI must also sign a form authorizing the Social Security Administration to reimburse DSS for any SAGA benefits provided while the SSI application is pending. This means that if the Social Security Administration finds that the person was eligible for SSI while receiving SAGA benefits, the Social Security Administration will send a portion of their SSI retro benefits directly to DSS to reimburse the State for the SAGA benefits it paid. The State will only receive the amount it paid out in SAGA benefits.

How do people apply for SAGA?

Online—The fastest and easiest way to apply. Visit www.connect.ct.gov and click on the “Apply Now” button. The “Am I Eligible?” feature on www.connect.ct.gov can also be used to check eligibility for SAGA.

In Person—Visit any DSS Resource Center to complete an application. Office locations can be found at www.ct.gov/dss under the “About Us” tab or call 2-1-1 to be referred to your nearest DSS Resource Center.

By Mail—To request an application, call the DSS Benefits Center at 1-855-CONNECT (1- 855-626-6632). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and have a TTD/TTY device can contact DSS at 1-800-842-4524. Persons who are blind or visually impaired, can contact DSS at 1-860-424-5040. You can also print an application from www.ct.gov/dss