

Q & A, cash assistance- Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), State Administered General Assistance, Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income

I did not work at all this year and have no income. Is there help for me?

There are stimulus payments that everyone qualifies for. There are also cash assistance programs for people who do not qualify for Unemployment Compensation.

Stimulus Payments.

Everyone with income under \$75,000 per year qualifies for a stimulus payment of \$1200 per adult and \$500 per dependent child under eighteen. Unfortunately, this will be sent primarily to bank accounts listed on your 2018 or 2019 tax return. For those who did not file a tax return in 2018 or 2019, you can file now. We hope the IRS will develop a simpler method. Check back on that.

Can I get a stimulus payment if I receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability benefits?

Yes. If you get Social Security Disability Benefits this will come to your direct deposit account automatically. As of this writing, SSI or Veterans Administration benefit recipients will not receive this rebate unless they filed a tax return in 2018 or 2019. You can still file a tax return for 2020 if you have not done so, to ensure you get the benefit.

DSS Cash Assistance programs

I have children with me but have not worked since last year

You may qualify for Temporary Family Assistance (TFA.) People who have custody of a child/children, and who have assets below \$3500 (you can also have a car with equity up to \$9500) may qualify for Temporary Family Assistance. (TFA) This program was time limited and had work requirements. Both are suspended since Covid-19.

If you are getting TFA now, you will be automatically renewed for six months if your current benefits run out in March or April.

If you used to get TFA, but DSS told you that you had “used up all your time,” it is likely that you are eligible now. People who got 60 months of TFA are no longer eligible (unless they have situations like disability or a child under one.) But people who got 21 months and two (or more) extensions but not 60 months of TFA can now qualify. You can apply on-line or by calling DSS.

Apply on-line <https://connect.ct.gov/access/jsp/access/Home.jsp>

Or call 1-855-6-CONNECT ([1-855-626-6632](tel:1-855-626-6632))

How much will I receive from TFA?

The benefit in Region B (Greater Hartford) is:

One person \$366/ month

Two people \$487/ month

Three people \$597/ month

Four people \$701/ month

I have no kids living with me and I have not worked since last year. Is there any cash assistance for me besides the stimulus payment?

Only if you have age or disability issues that make it hard for you to work. The State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) program pays a small monthly amount (\$219 or \$55 if you do not have to pay for the place you live in.) People must show either proof that they are unable to work for at least six months, or a recent connection to the work force and proof that they are unable to work for at least two months. This generally requires proof from a medical provider. DSS has a simpler form during this Covid-19 period and may be able to contact your provider for you to get the proof.

You are also considered unable to work if you are:

over 65,

over 55 and have not worked a total of 6 months in the past five years, or

are needed to care for a household member who has a condition that keeps him or her from working.

What about disability benefits?

Social Security disability benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are programs for people who cannot work because they have a disability that keeps them from working for a period of at least 12 months. It will likely take over a year to qualify for these benefits if you are just applying now. Applications that are already filed are being processed, but you can expect delays.

How can I reach SSA?

Social Security Offices are closed to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can still get our help by using SSA online services or calling them at 1-800-772-1213. SSA prefers you to try on-line services before calling. www.ssa.gov You can apply and check the status of your case on-line or by phone.

If SSA offices are closed, will I still have my hearing?

Yes. SSA will contact you prior to your scheduled hearing to offer you a hearing by phone.

What if I am not a citizen?

People who are not documented and DACA recipients do not qualify for any of these cash payments. People who have green cards can qualify for TFA or SAGA. People who are refugees or victims of abuse with VAWA approval and certain other special categories of immigrants may also qualify. People with green cards, who have been here for five years may qualify for SSI.

Will receiving these benefits affect my ability to get a green card? Will receiving these benefits affect my ability to get a green card?

The stimulus payment is considered a tax rebate, not a cash benefit, and so is not counted against you when you apply for a green card.

Immigration rules generally do consider receipt of cash benefits (but not the stimulus payment) as a negative factor when you apply for a green card. This is called “public charge.” When assessing public charge, immigration officials look at a number of factors, including your age, health, education, skills, employment history, receipt of benefits in the past etc. United States Citizenship and Immigration (USCIS) has stated, if you need public benefits because of COVID-19, you can provide a statement explaining why you needed these benefits at the time of application for your green card. The USCIS website says if the green card applicant:

“lives and works in a jurisdiction where disease prevention methods such as social distancing or quarantine are in place, or where the alien’s employer, school, or university voluntarily shuts down operations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the alien may submit a statement with his or her application for adjustment of status to explain how such methods or policies have affected the alien as relevant to the factors USCIS must consider in a public charge inadmissibility determination.”

If you can make a good showing that, you needed the help, because of Covid-19 USCIS probably won’t count it against you.

KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING YOU SUBMIT TO SSA OR DSS, IN CASE THEY GET LOST!

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