



## Benefits for Asylum Seekers Who are Waiting for a Work Permit

*Note: The “Public Charge” rule does not apply to people who are seeking asylum or who are asylees. Getting help with health care, food, housing, or other needs will not affect your ability to get a green card with an asylee status. Learn more at <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/know-your-rights/>.*

If you have applied for asylum and have a receipt from the federal government (USCIS) with your A number,

OR

If you had a work permit, that work permit has expired, and you are waiting for a new work permit to be issued, then you may be eligible for the following benefits:



### Health Care

#### For Pregnant People and Children (under age 21):

You can get full MaineCare benefits for doctor’s visits, medications, or hospitalization. Apply at [your local DHHS office](#) or online at [My Maine Connection](#).

#### For Everyone Else:

**Emergency MaineCare:** You can get Emergency MaineCare. It only pays for health care services that are needed to stabilize a serious health problem in an emergency.

**Clinics and Hospitals:** If you are not able to get health insurance, free clinics can provide you with some basic health care services at no cost. There are also sliding-scale clinics that provide high-quality basic health care. These clinics provide discounts based on household income. Hospital facilities provide limited free care for people with low income to help with some costs for health care.

## If you do not have health insurance:

### Portland Area Resources:

- [Care Partners](#): To sign up or for more information call 1-877-626-1684
- [Greater Portland Health](#)
  - Various locations in the greater Portland area
  - Call 207 -874-2141 for more information.
- [Portland Community Free Clinic](#)
  - 39 Forest Avenue, Portland
  - Call 207-874-8982

### Lewiston Area Resources:

- Sliding-Scale Clinics –
  - [CCS B Street Health Center](#) - 57 Birch Street in Lewiston – Call 207-753-5400
  - [CCS Second Street Pediatric Dental Center](#) – 60 Second Street in Auburn – Call 207-755-3456
  - [Western Maine Family Health](#) - 16 Depot Street in Livermore Falls, Suite 300 – Call 207-897-4345
- [Free Women's Health Clinic](#) (pregnant women/parents) - 87 College Street in Lewiston – Call 207-577-1165
- [New Mainers Public Health Initiative](#) – 276 Lisbon St. #280 in Lewiston, can give you information and help locally – Call 207-241-0546

### Statewide Resources:

For more information on healthcare eligibility contact [Consumers for Affordable Health Care](#). You can call them at 1-800-965-7476.

For a longer list of health centers in Maine, visit [Maine Primary Care Association's website](#).



## Rent and other Basic Needs

### Maine Housing Rental Assistance Program/Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA):

You can get help paying your rent through the [Maine Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#). This is a COVID response program that is estimated to be available at least until the end of 2022.

There is information about the program in many languages on the [Maine State Housing website](#). Scroll down to choose your county and apply for this help.

This program can pay for:

- Current and past due rent
- Current and past due utilities and home energy costs (including internet in some circumstances)
- Moving and relocation costs

If you live in Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, or anywhere else in Cumberland County, you can apply directly to [Prosperity Maine](#).

If you live in Lewiston, Auburn or anywhere else in Androscoggin County, you can apply directly to [Immigrant Resource Center of Maine](#).

You can also contact [The Opportunity Alliance](#).

### General Assistance:

General Assistance, or **GA**, helps pay for housing costs and other basic needs like food and medications. You must apply to the town or city where you live.

You will need to show proof that you have applied for asylum, such as a copy of the receipt that you got when you sent in your application.

**Call the town office of the town or city where you live** to make an appointment to apply. You have the right to fill out an application and to get a written decision. If you are denied you have the right to appeal, and the appeal will be heard within 5 days.

If you live in one of these towns, contact:

- [Portland GA Office](#): 39 Forest Ave, Suite 2 (207)-482-5122 (Call 207-775-2922 in an emergency or after office hours)
- [South Portland GA Office](#): Call 207-767-6717
- [Westbrook GA Office](#): 426 Bridge Street 207-591-7015

- [Lewiston GA Office](#): 27 Pine Street (207) 513-3130 (Call 911 in an emergency or after office hours).

For more information about GA, visit Pine Tree Legal Assistance's website by [clicking here](#).

If you are not able to contact your local town office to apply for GA, or if you are told that you cannot apply for GA, call the DHHS hotline at 1-800-442-6003.

If you are denied General Assistance or if you are facing eviction and you need legal advice, please contact:

- [Pine Tree Legal Assistance](#):
  - Look up your office at [ptla.org/contact-us](http://ptla.org/contact-us)
  - Be sure to call Monday 12:00 - 2:30 or Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 - 11:30



## Help with Food

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP helps people pay for food. You get a card you can use to buy food at grocery stores.

You may be eligible for **SNAP** while you are waiting for work authorization. When you get work authorization and start a new job, report this to DHHS within 10 days by calling 855-797-4357 or by emailing [farmington.dhhs@maine.gov](mailto:farmington.dhhs@maine.gov).

You may also qualify for **SNAP** if you are disabled, 65 or older, or if you have experienced domestic violence.

You can apply at your [local DHHS office](#) or online at <https://www1.maine.gov/benefits/account/login.html>.

Children in public school programs and some childcare programs may be eligible for free meals at school. This could also qualify them to receive Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) or Summer P-EBT in the future. For more information about these programs, visit <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofl/programs-services/food-supplement>.



## Help for Families with Children

### TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF provides cash help to families with children living at home. **TANF** can help you pay for the basic needs of your family, like rent, heat, and diapers.

You may be eligible for **TANF** while you are waiting for work authorization. When you get work authorization and start a new job, report this to DHHS within 10 days by calling 855-797-4357 or by emailing [farmington.dhhs@maine.gov](mailto:farmington.dhhs@maine.gov).

You may also qualify for **TANF** if you have children at home and you are disabled, 65 or older, or you have experienced domestic violence.



## Help for Elders and People with Disabilities

**Supplemental Security Income**, called **SSI**, gives you cash to pay for basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Sometimes people call this program **Social Security**.

You may be able to get SSI if you have low income AND:

- You are 65 or older; **or**
- You are blind **or** have a disability. (Having a “disability” means you have a serious physical or mental health problem and cannot work full-time for at least 12 months)

**First**, apply for SSI at your local DHHS office. **Second**, you will need to get a denial from the Social Security Administration (SSA) based on your immigration status. You may need to apply for a social security card to get a denial from SSA:

- Portland Social Security Administration (SSA) Office –1355 Congress Street, Floor #2 in Portland - Call: 1-877-319-3076
- Auburn Social Security Administration (SSA) Office - 600 Turner Street in Lewiston - Call: (833) 388-6432

If you do not live in Portland or Lewiston and do not know where your SSA office is, you can [click here](#) and enter your zip code to get that information.



## Help you can get by filing your 2021 taxes

There are tax credits you might be eligible for, even if you have little or no income and have never filed taxes before.

- If you work and have low income, you may qualify for the state and federal [Earned Income Tax Credit](#).
- If you rent an apartment or own a home, you may qualify for the [Property Tax Fairness Credit](#).
- If you have little or no income, you may qualify for the [Sales Tax Fairness Credit](#).
- You may also be eligible for the [2021 expanded Child Tax Credit](#) (up to \$3,600 per child with a Social Security Number).

Receiving federal tax credits that you are eligible for [will not](#) affect your immigration status, your ability to get a green card, or your future eligibility for immigration benefits. Use of federal tax credits is not considered for purposes of a "public charge" determination by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The Child Tax Credit and other tax credits will not count against federally funded public benefits, like TANF (income support), SNAP (food assistance), or MaineCare, but will count against General Assistance.

You do not need to have income for many of these credits, but you DO need to file taxes!

You can get FREE help filing your taxes from a local, trusted organization, the CASH Coalition of Maine! Call 211 for an appointment or sign up at [CASH Maine](#).